

NH COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF MEN

Minutes

January 30 2009

Legislative Office Building

The meeting was called to order at 1:09

Opening and Introduction of the Commissioners – Joe Mastromarino, Larry Colby, Mike Geanoulis, David Lauren, Scott Meyer and Cam Sinclair were in attendance. Commissioners welcomed Representative Lawrence Perkins to the meeting. Joe informed him that the meeting was held the previous day and welcomed him to stay

Commissioners assembled a list of agenda items since the resignation of Commissioner Scott Garman resulted in the lack thereof. Commissioner Colby offered to be secretary for the Commission if he could interrupt at will in order to be clear, accurate and get correct name spelling, etc. Commissioner Lauren quickly seconded and the vote was unanimous. Colby demurred about keeping past minutes, files, attachments, etc and Commissioner Sinclair volunteered to store them. Commissioners all agreed to this arrangement and David thanked Larry for taking on the task

The following items made up the Commission agenda for January with notes added:

- 1. 10th Annual NE Fathering Conference – Larry asked about the procedure to produce the check for \$500 dollars to support the conference previously agreed to. David offered to walk over to the office of Barry Bodell, NH Administrative Services to find out. Joe announced a \$1,000 dollar donation and asked David to deposit this at the same time and to submit a bill for \$35 dollars for rental of the Upham-Walker House. Mr. Bodell accepted the bill and donation for deposit. He asked that a bill from the Fathering Conference be submitted to him with advance notice and Colby will follow up. Larry also announced that the sponsorship by the Commission means that two members could attend without paying registration fees. He distributed brochures for the conference (attached) and pointed out the listing of the NHCSM (NH Commission on the Status of Men) on the sponsors page**
- 2. Child Cost Study – (Tabled)**
- 3. Commission Intern – Commissioners talked again about the feasibility of an intern. The general conclusion was that until there are tasks for an intern to undertake there is no need to fine-tune the issues related to having one (liability, etc)**
- 4. Gender Gap Study – (Tabled)**
- 5. Getting men involved in early education/schools/appearance by Elaine Holden – David suggested the Commission invite Elaine to speak to efforts to increase parent/father involvement in schools. Joe suggested that men and education was a part of the Commission's charge and all agreed to David's recommendation. He will invite Elaine Holden and get her title to Larry**

6. Letter to the NH Attorney General – Joe reminded members of an important issue brought forth via verbal and written testimony to the Commission: NH and police officers in the state not following state regulations/criminal codes regarding parental visitation rights. The second important issue involves Commission involvement to seek clarification. David read the state regulation regarding RSA 633:4 (attached) and made the point that the law is primarily to protect the child. Commissioner Geanoulis stated that an equally important part of the law was to guarantee a father's access to his child/children and stated that legal visitation was being blocked in many cases. Larry asked Representative Perkins if he would share his experience with this issue and Lawrence reported 10 to 12 instances of capricious behavior by his ex-spouse that prevented contact with his daughter. Scott stated that local police officials confronted with two parents disagreeing about specific visitation schedules feel stymied. Cam suggested that police officers might welcome a set of guidelines regarding appropriate steps when confronted by such a situation. After further and passionate discussion, Commissioners agreed:

 - a. That the issue demands action and the Commission is duty-bound to get involved
 - b. That Larry will draft a letter to Attorney General Ayotte (and possibly NH Police Chiefs Association) stating and requesting:
 - Testimony has indicated that is RSA 633:4 is not being enforced consistently
 - NHCSM requests clarification
 - Would you be so kind as to respond in writing and/or at an appearance before the Commission
 - c. Cam said he would try to contact Chief Smith
7. NH Study of Domestic Violence/Appearance by Grace Mattern, Director of the NH Coalition against Domestic and Sexual Violence (NHCADSV) – David offered to invite Grace to the February or the April meeting of the Commission. He will offer any 30 minute block between 1 and 3 that works for her on either day.
8. Nomination of a new Commissioner to replace Mr. Garman – Joe offered to contact the Governor's office and the Executive Council with news of the empty seat. Commissioners will wait with bated breath for action on a replacement
9. Parent Information and Resource Center (NHPIRC) presentation – John-Michael Dumais of NHPIRC (Parent Information and Resource Center) presented information and opened a dialogue between the Commission and PIRC. He suggested that parent involvement in education and greater male involvement are two common areas of interest. He shared brochures and a poster (attached) and announced an event in Manchester, 'Partnerships for Education' on Saturday March 21 at the campus of Southern NH University. Joe offered a motion with a second from Larry to spend \$250 dollars for a display table at the event. This action was approved. Cam and Larry volunteered to join a panel discussion around men's issues and John-Michael accepted the offer. He asked Larry and Cam to email some bio bullet points to him and to bring a dad if possible. John-Michael also said that the Commission could have an ad in the workshop brochure and Scott volunteered to create one. He will share a draft with members. Joe asked if the Commission should print 100 copies to have some available

at the workshop and all agreed. Joe thanked John-Michael for his presentation and said he looks forward to an active partnering

10. **Publicity for the Commission – David reporting being contacted by a reporter from the *Concord Monitor* newspaper asking for his reaction to reports that the current budget situation may dictate a cut in state support of the NH Commission on the Status of Women. David responded that he could not speak for the men's commission and until the NH Commission on the Status of Men received any state funding including mileage reimbursement, the women's commission is on their own. Michael reported that Scott Garman had volunteered to remain the Web Master of the NHCSM site. Larry suggested that Scott's offer be accepted with awareness that he is no longer a member of the Commission and would be a volunteer contractor. Commission members agreed to this and Mike will contact Scott with our appreciation**
11. **Review of Legislation – (Tabled)**
12. **Commissioner Meyer suggested a discussion about partnerships versus MOU (Memorandum of Understanding)s or more formal agreements between the Commission and groups such as NHPIRC (Parent Information and Resource Center) as a future agenda item**
13. **The meeting ended at 3:53**

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Colby